DARK HORSE COMICS
THE MASK #1
$2.50 US
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THE
MASK
Strikes Back
1 of 5
DM 94
KW

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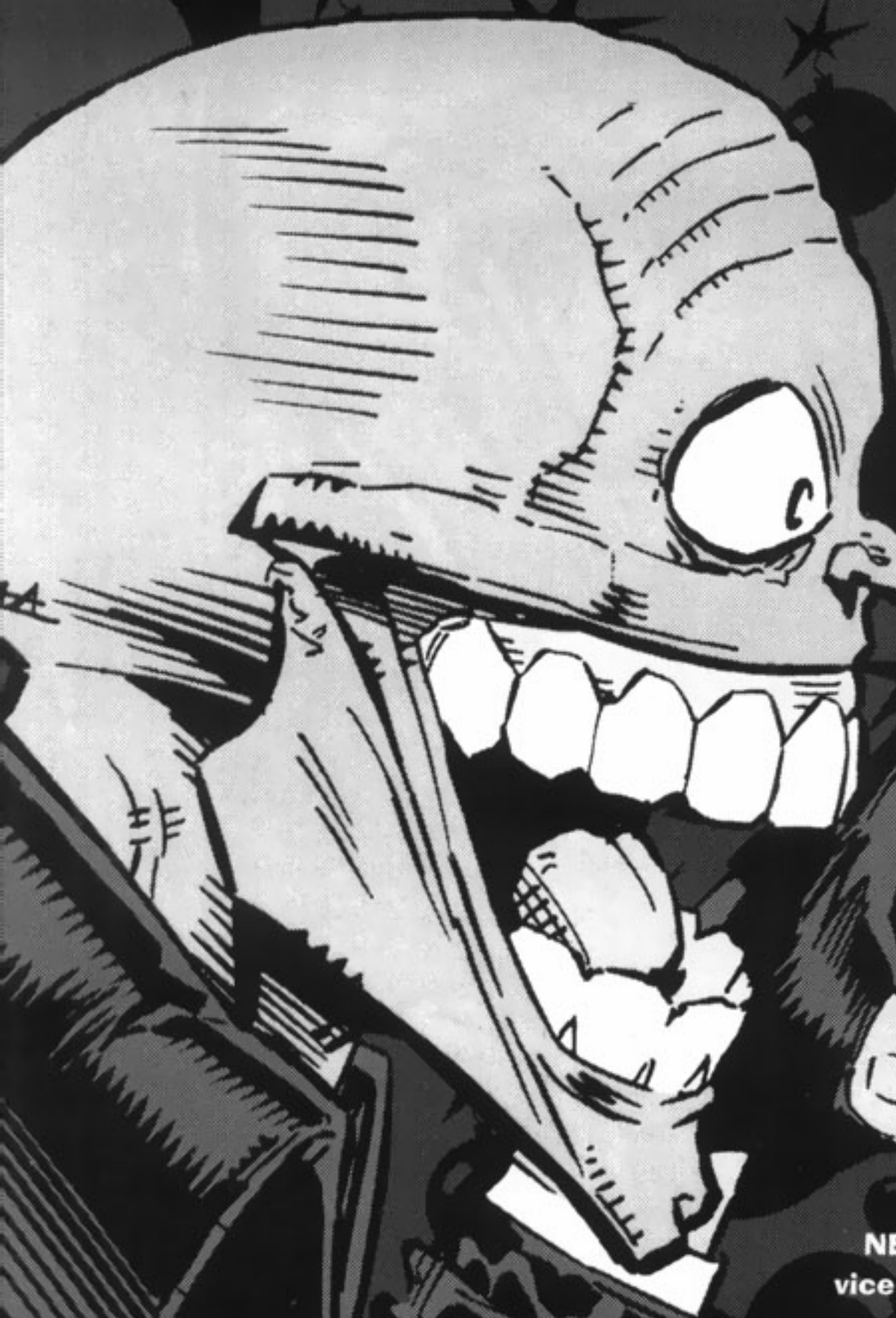

THE MASK™ Strikes Back 1 of 5

THE MASK™
created by
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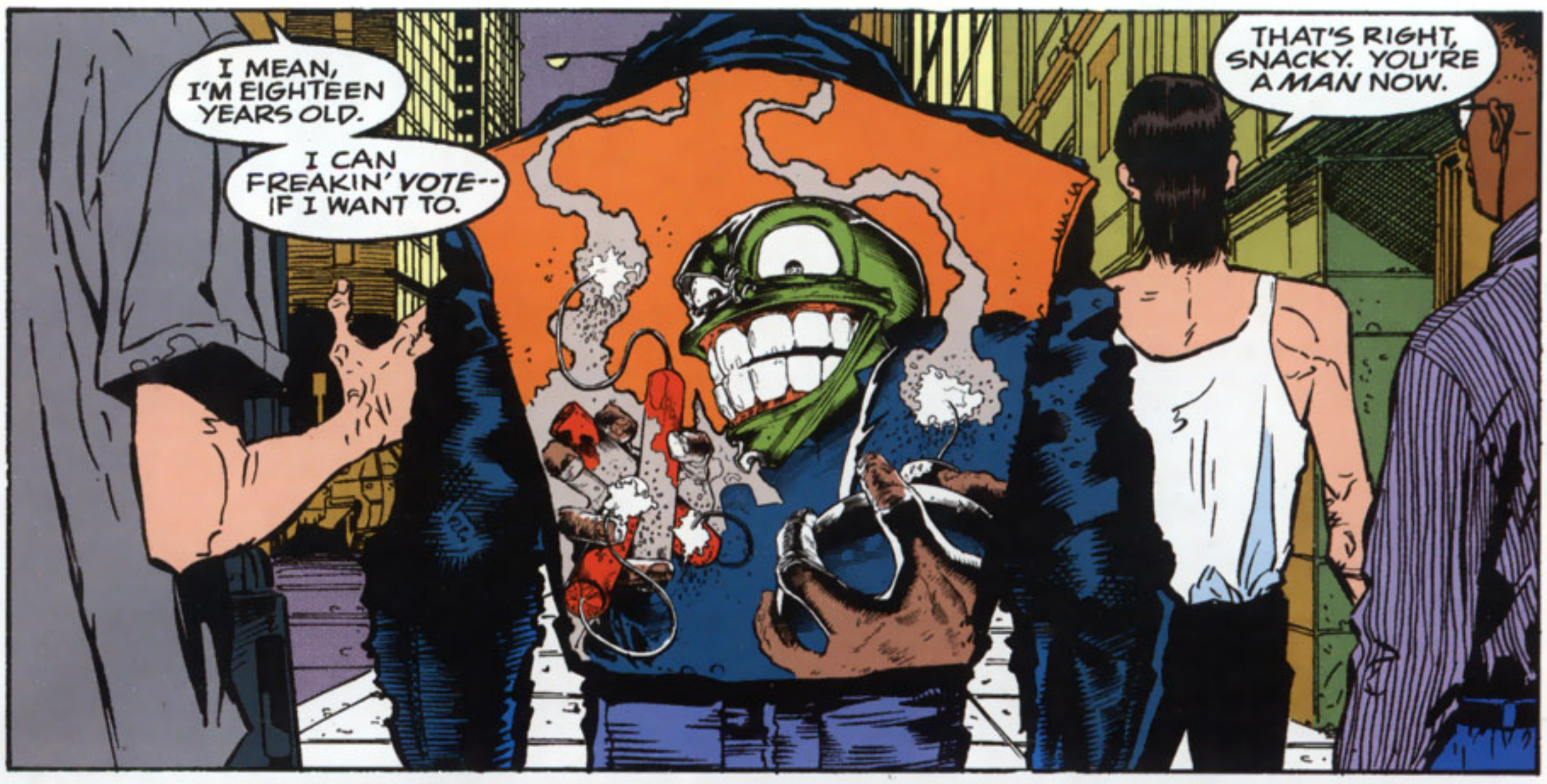
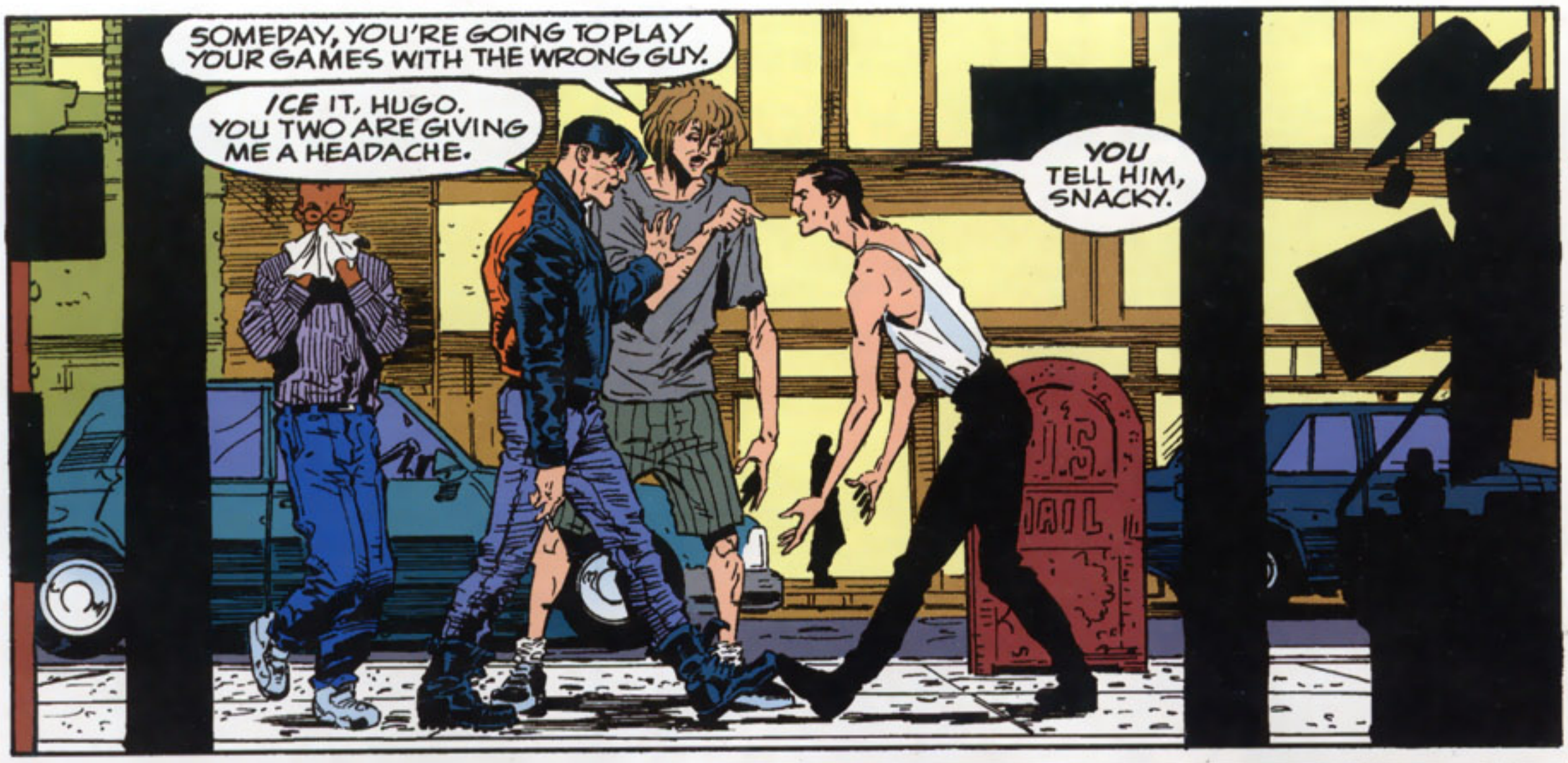
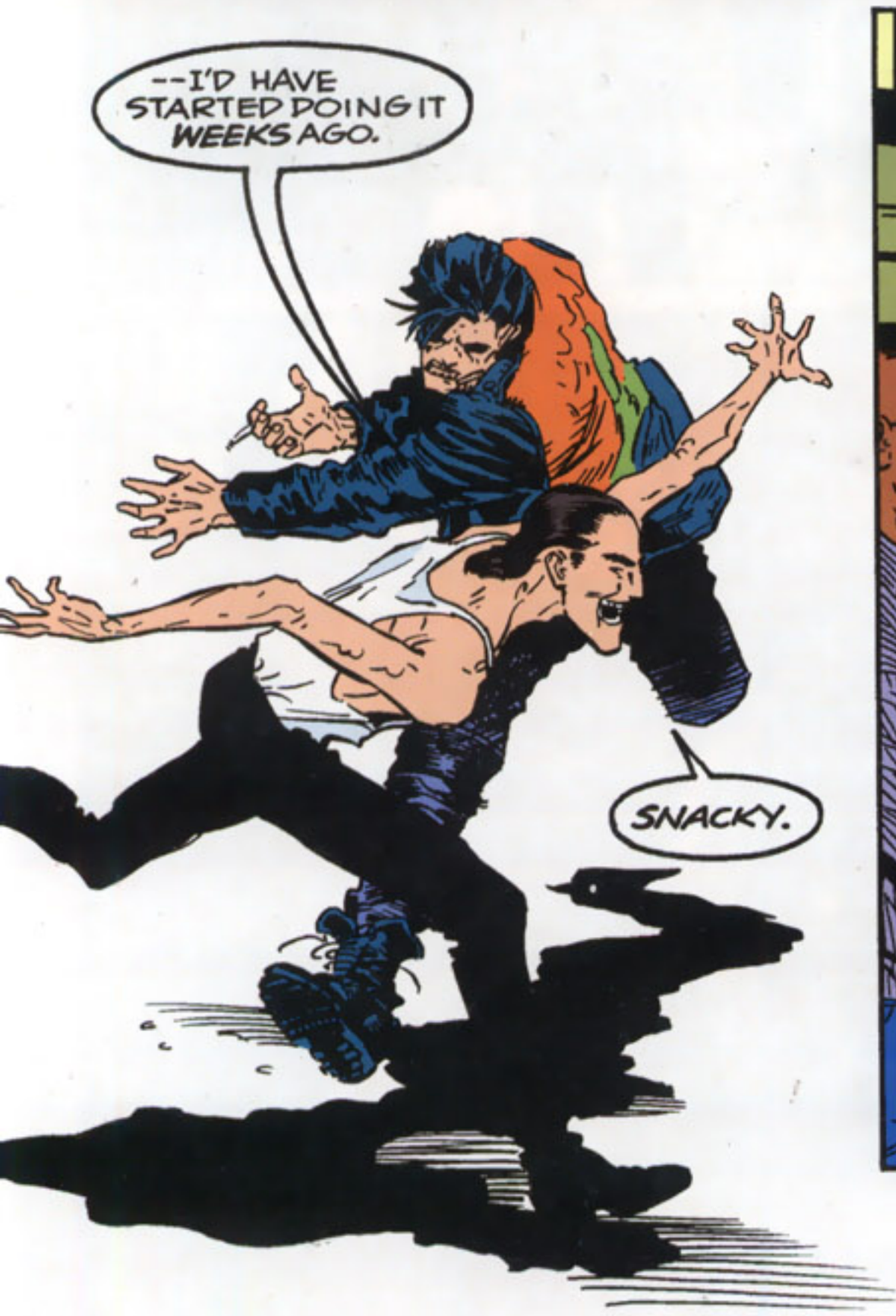

I MEAN, I'M EIGHTEEN YEARS OLD.
I CAN FREAKIN' VOTE-- IF I WANT TO.
THAT'S RIGHT, SNACKY. YOU'RE A MAN NOW.

SOON AS I FIND ME A PLACE, OUT I MOVE. I MEAN IT.
A JOB MIGHT COME IN HANDY THERE.

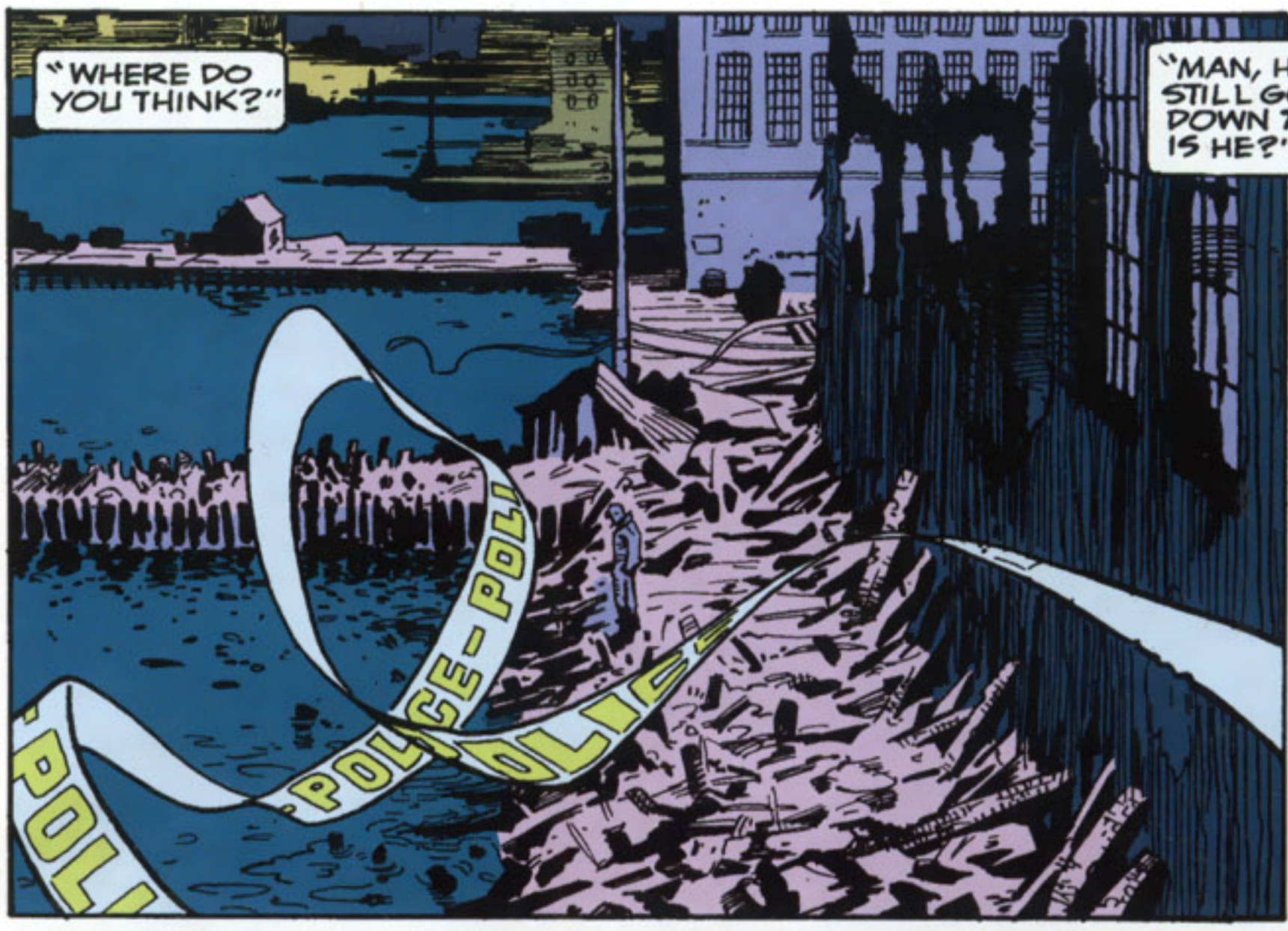
YOU KNOW, BEN, I GET THAT CRAP AT HOME.
DON'T NEED IT FROM YOU.
C'MON, I CAN TAKE YA', I CAN TAKE YA'!


SOMEDAY, YOU'RE GOING TO PLAY YOUR GAMES WITH THE WRONG GUY.
ICE IT, HUGO. YOU TWO ARE GIVING ME A HEADACHE.
YOU TELL HIM, SNACKY.
JAIL

I'M TELLING YOU--TOO.
AND WHAT'S WITH THIS "SNACKY" STUFF? WHERE AND WHY DID YOU PICK IT UP?
GOSH-- IF I'D KNOWN IT WAS GONNA BOTHER YOU THIS MUCH--


--I'D HAVE STARTED DOING IT WEEKS AGO.
SNACKY.

KIDS!
HEY, YOU GONNA DROP BY ARCHIE'S LATER, RIGHT?
WHERE'S HE HEADING?


"WHERE DO YOU THINK?"
POLICE-POLICE
POLICE

"MAN, HE'S NOT STILL GOING DOWN *THERE*, IS HE?"

"OH, YES. THE PLACE IS LIKE *MECCA* TO HIM."
"HEY, *BIG-HEAD* WAS A KICK AND ALL--
"--BUT RICK'S, LIKE, *OBSESSED* WITH HIM.

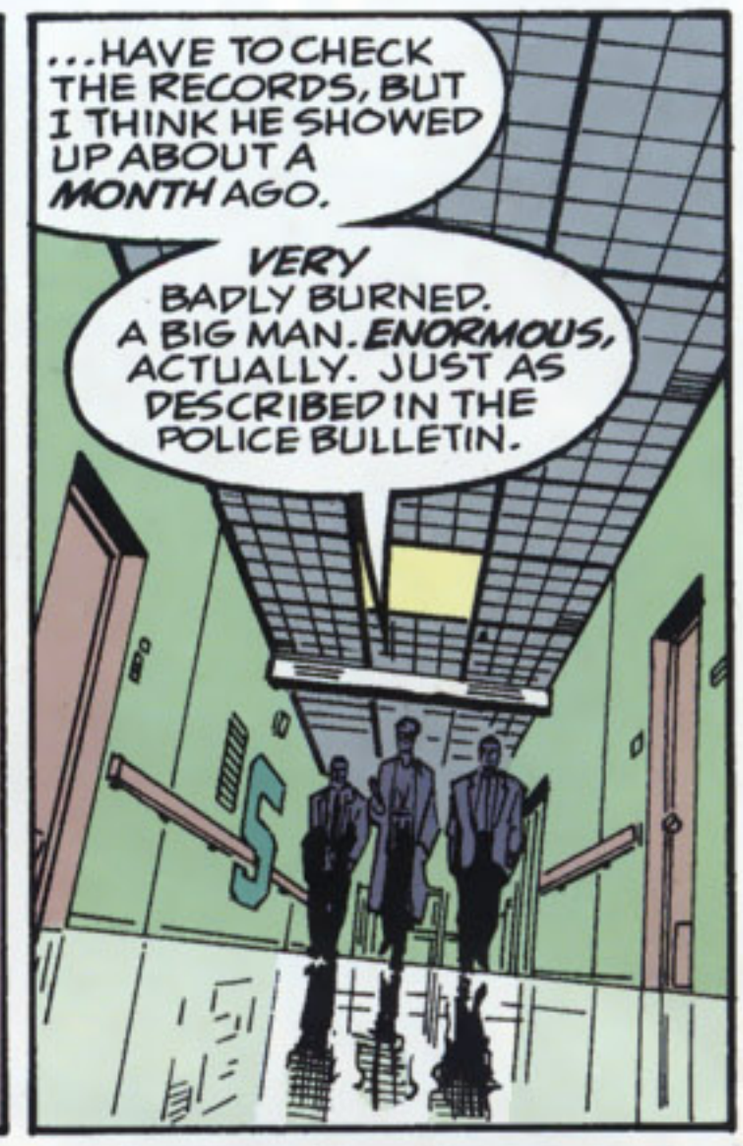
"HASN'T IT BEEN MORE THAN A MONTH SINCE BIG-HEAD *BOUGHT* IT?

"I MEAN, WHAT DOES HE THINK HE'S GONNA *FIND* DOWN THERE?"
S S S S S S S S
NOTHING.

NO BODY, NO REMAINS, NO CLOTHES.
NOTHING.
HOW DO WE KNOW BIG-HEAD IS REALLY DEAD?
MIGHT JUST BE ANOTHER LIE, FED TO US BY THE STATE.
THEY'D DO ANYTHING TO MAINTAIN THEIR ORDER, WOULDN'T THEY?
I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE HE'S DEAD. I CAN'T!
I WON'T!
CHIG CHIG CHIG
CHUNK
?

MAN, THIS IS GREAT. THIS IS WHERE I BELONG.
AND I'M JUST ITCHING TO DRIVE.
DON'T I KNOW IT.
WHAT SAY WE WAIL THAT SIREN?
THAT'S WHY I BROUGHT THESE ALONG.
WHAT'S THAT?
CLICK CLACK
THE .45 SLUGS THEY PULLED OUT OF YOUR BACK NOT EIGHT WEEKS AGO.
IN OTHER WORDS, SLOW DOWN.

"ANYWAY, WE'RE ALMOST AT THE HOSPITAL."
DOCTOR GLUD? I'M KELLAWAY AND THIS IS DETECTIVE LIONEL. YOU CALLED US?
YES, OF COURSE. HE'S ON THE FIFTH FLOOR, IN THE BURN WARD.


...HAVE TO CHECK THE RECORDS, BUT I THINK HE SHOWED UP ABOUT A MONTH AGO.
VERY BADLY BURNED. A BIG MAN. ENORMOUS, ACTUALLY. JUST AS DESCRIBED IN THE POLICE BULLETIN.

RIGHT IN HE--
OH, MY GAWD!!

A SHEET-ROPE? MAN, THIS GUY WATCHES TOO MANY ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MOVIES.
AND HE MUST EAT A LOT OF POPCORN IF HE'S TOO HEAVY TO EVEN USE IT.
BUT... BUT...

THAT'S A FORTY-FOOT DROP.
WHERE IS HE?

CAN YOU NAME THE SEVEN DWARFS?
Star Tribune
BIGHEAD KILLER FIGHTS FOR JUSTICE?
LET'S SEE. THERE'S SKANKY, RUMMY, LOUSY, FUNKY... uhh...
EXIT
SNACKY.
Star Tribune
BIGHEAD KILLER FIGHTS FOR JUSTICE?
BIGHEAD
HOW ARE YOU TODAY, LITTLE LARVA?
SHUT UP. Uhhh, SPAZZY, WOEFUL, AND LOP.
Ahh, I'M BORED.
HEADING OVER TO JACK-IN-THE-SNACK. YOU GUYS WANT ANYTHING?
A BURGER WOULD BE NICE.
SOME OF THOSE CHICKEN THINGS, IF THEY STILL GOT 'EM.

AND I'LL HAVE A DOUBLE-BACON LIMBURGER...
...SOME OUCHY FRIES--
--AND A LARGE ORDER OF JACK-THE-RIPPER JELLO.
DON'T THOSE SILLY FOOD NAMES MAKE EATING SO MUCH MORE FUN?

ALL RIGHT NOW, OFF WITH YOU, LAD!
AND DON'T SPARE THE HORSES.
SLAM!!
DOODAH DOODAH DAY!
COMICS!
MONSTERS OUT OF CONTROL!!
DO YOU HAVE LAST YEAR'S "OOZY THE SNAIL SUMMER SPECIAL" WHERE HE MEETS UZI THE AUTO?
I JUST LOVE THAT ONE.

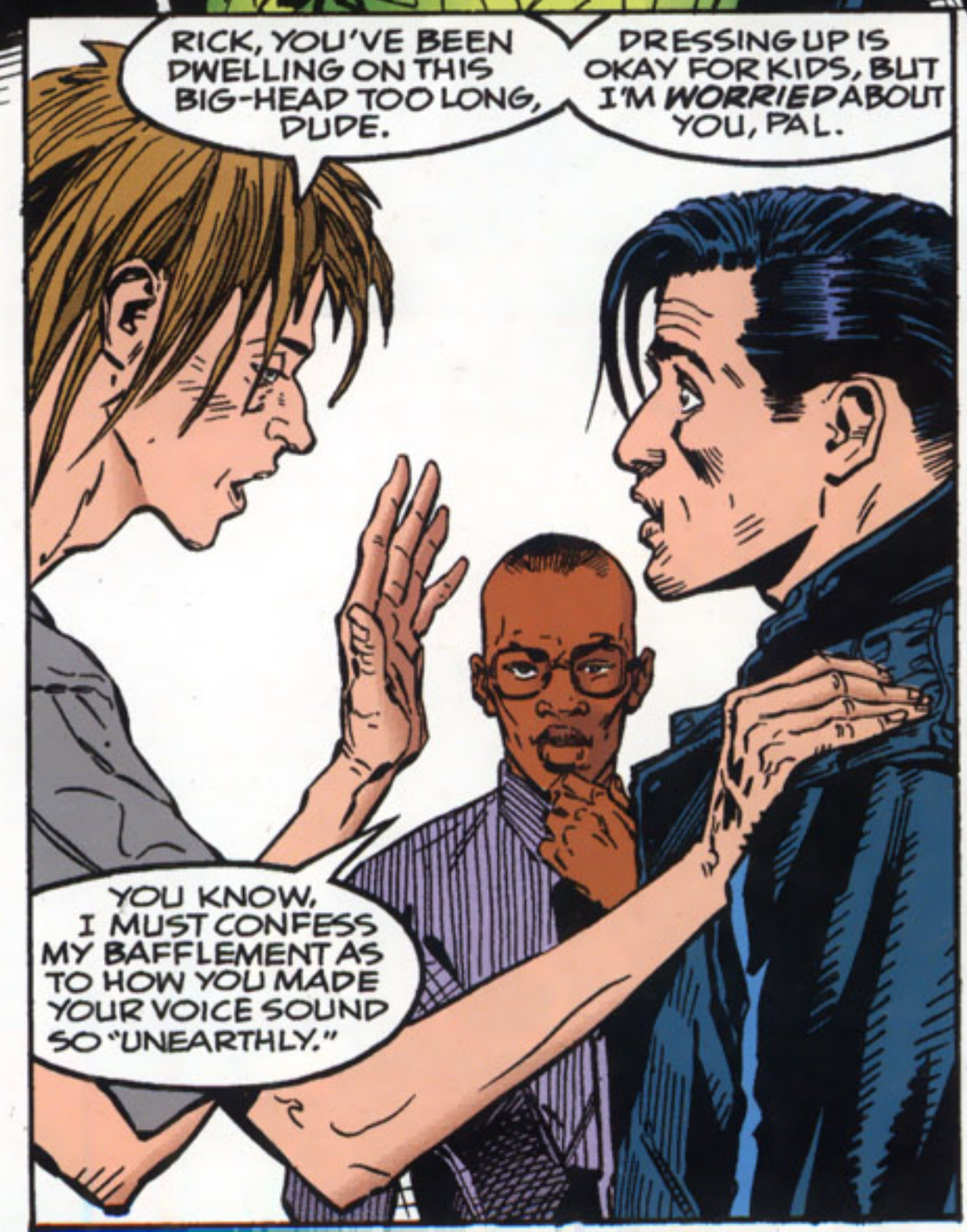
EXIT
HUGO, ARCHIE, IT'S, IT'S--
--BIG-HEAD!
WHERE, WHERE?!
NO, YOU. YOU'RE BIG-HEAD.
YOU LOOK LIKE THE PICTURES, AND YOU'RE ACTING LIKE THE REPORTERS SAY HE ACTED. YOU GOTTA BE HIM.
DON'T YA...?
WELLLL, YES.
AND NO.

CHECK IT OUT, IT'S JUST RICK. COOL GET-UP.
GEEZ, THAT THING SURE LOOKS A LOT DIFFERENT OFF YOUR FACE.
VERY AMUSING. ONLY HOW ON EARTH DID YOU MAKE YOUR VOICE SOUND LIKE THAT?

NO, NO. IT WASN'T A GAG, IT AIN'T A GET-UP!!
I REALLY WAS BIG-HEAD!
uh-huh. SURE THING, SNACKY.

I'M TELLING YOU, IT'S THIS MASK.
WHEN I PUT IT ON, IT TRANSFORMS ME.

I'M LIKE A LIVING WEAPON OF REBELLION. I AM BIG-HEAD.

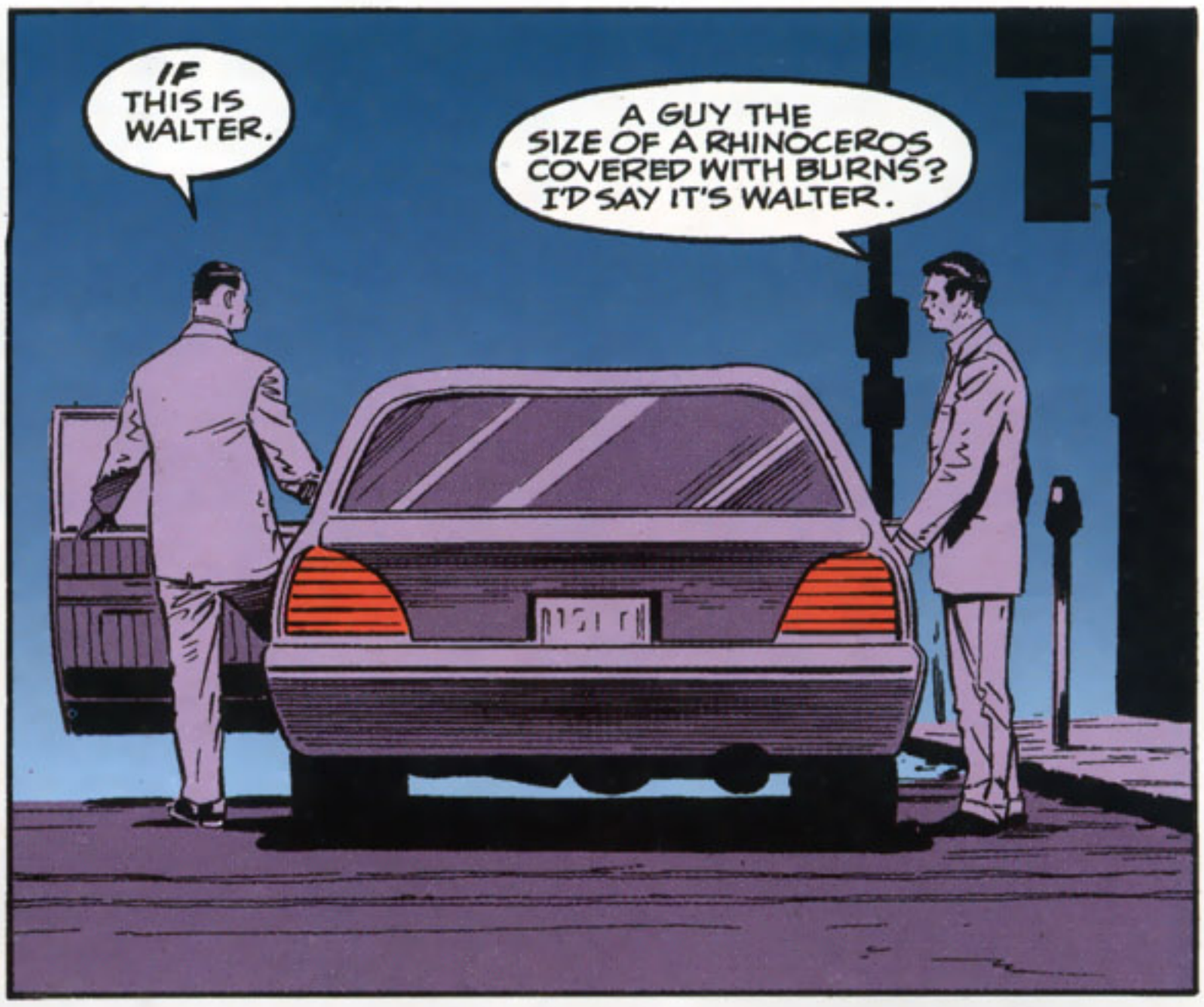

RICK, YOU'VE BEEN DWELLING ON THIS BIG-HEAD TOO LONG, DUDE.
DRESSING UP IS OKAY FOR KIDS, BUT I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOU, PAL.
YOU KNOW, I MUST CONFESS MY BAFFLEMENT AS TO HOW YOU MADE YOUR VOICE SOUND SO "UNEARTHLY."

AND THOSE TEETH WERE AS BIG AS BASE-BALL CARDS.
HERE, I'LL SHOW YOU--I'LL SHOW YOU!

A MACE. BITCHIN'!
OBSOIVE.
WHERE DID THAT COME FROM?
WHACK!
HEH HEH ehh
EEEEE-AHOOOOO...
KRANGG!

SPORTCOATS · OUTERWEAR
LARGEST SIZES PLUS
RAINCOATS · TOPCOATS
PERRY ELLIS
BUNYANS BIG AND TAL
FASCINATING STUFF, BUT THERE ARE OTHER THINGS HAPPENING TONIGHT.
THAT'S ALL. JUST THE TRENCH COAT AND ONE BOX OF LICENCIADOS.
OKAY, THANKS A LOT.
VASILIS SMOKE INC
CIGARS AND CIGARETTES
PIPES AND TOBACCO BLENDS
VASILIS
LOOKS LIKE OUR BOY, ALL RIGHT.
157
WELL, I CAN SEE WHY A GUY WEARING NOTHING BUT BANDAGES AND A HOSPITAL GOWN WOULD WANT THE OVERCOAT...
...BUT WHY STEAL A BOX OF CIGARS?
HEY, THOSE ARE NOT CHEAP SMOKES.
Ahh, THERE'S THE HUMOR I'VE MISSED SO.
SORRY, LIONEL. IT JUST FEELS SO GOOD TO BE BACK.
THOSE FEW MONTHS AWAY FROM THE FORCE SEEMED LIKE FOREVER.
BUT NOW THAT I'M BACK, IT'S LIKE NO TIME AT ALL HAS GONE BY.
THANK GOD THE CAPTAIN REINSTATED ME.
YOU KNOW, YOU NEVER DID TURN IN THAT RESIGNATION HE ASKED YOU FOR.
HELL, YOU COULD PROBABLY SUE FOR BACK PAY.

HO, NO. FROM NOW ON, I'M GONNA BE A GOOD BOY. THE DEPARTMENT WON'T HEAR A PEEP OUT OF ME.
NOW LET'S GO FIND WALTER. I WANT TO WRAP UP THIS BIG-HEAD CASE ONCE AND FOR ALL.


IF THIS IS WALTER.
A GUY THE SIZE OF A RHINOCEROS COVERED WITH BURNS? I'D SAY IT'S WALTER.

THE THING IS, IF I ACCEPT THAT WALTER LIVED THROUGH THAT BIG FIRE BY THE PIER--
--THEN WHAT'S TO STOP ME FROM BELIEVING BIG-HEAD'S STILL ALIVE?

BIG
1137

HE'S NOT, IS HE? ALIVE, I MEAN.
BIG-HEAD IS DEAD, RIGHT?
LIEUTENANT...?
1137

VANS BIG
1137
DON'T WORRY, LIONEL.
OLD PUNKINHEAD IS STONE COLD.

GOOD LORD, I DON'T HEAR ANYTHING.
OKAY, YOU KNOW THE PROCEDURE, CORRECT?
LET'S JUST DO IT, MAN!
HUH?!
GRIN

LEGGO OF HIM, YOU MANIAC! LEGGO!!
POP
HAW HAW
Sweet MotherMcGree, YOU SHOULDA SEEN YOUR FACES.

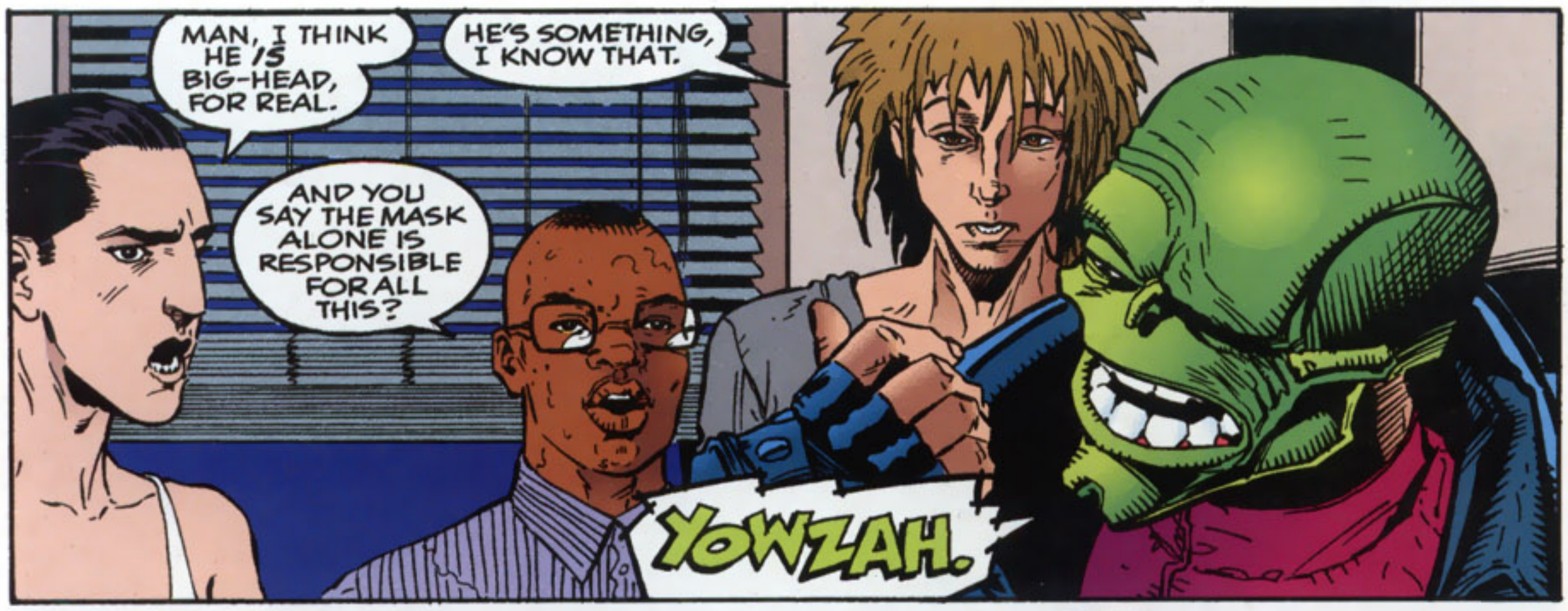
I DON'T UNDERSTAND. I'M QUITE CERTAIN THAT I HEARD NO PULSE.

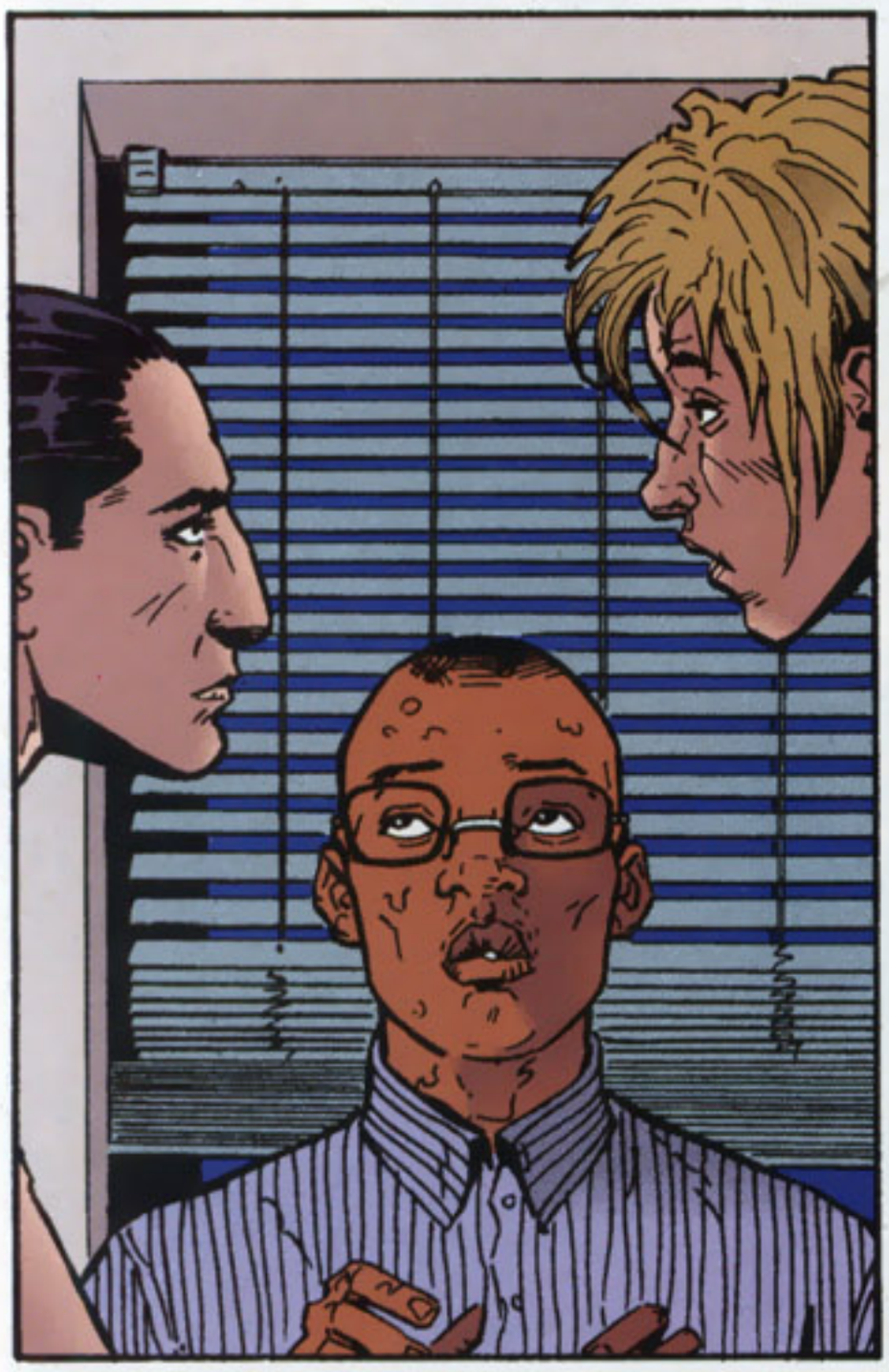
OOOOH, YEAH. THANKS FOR REMINDING ME.

THUMP THUMP
THUMP THUMP
THUMP THUMP

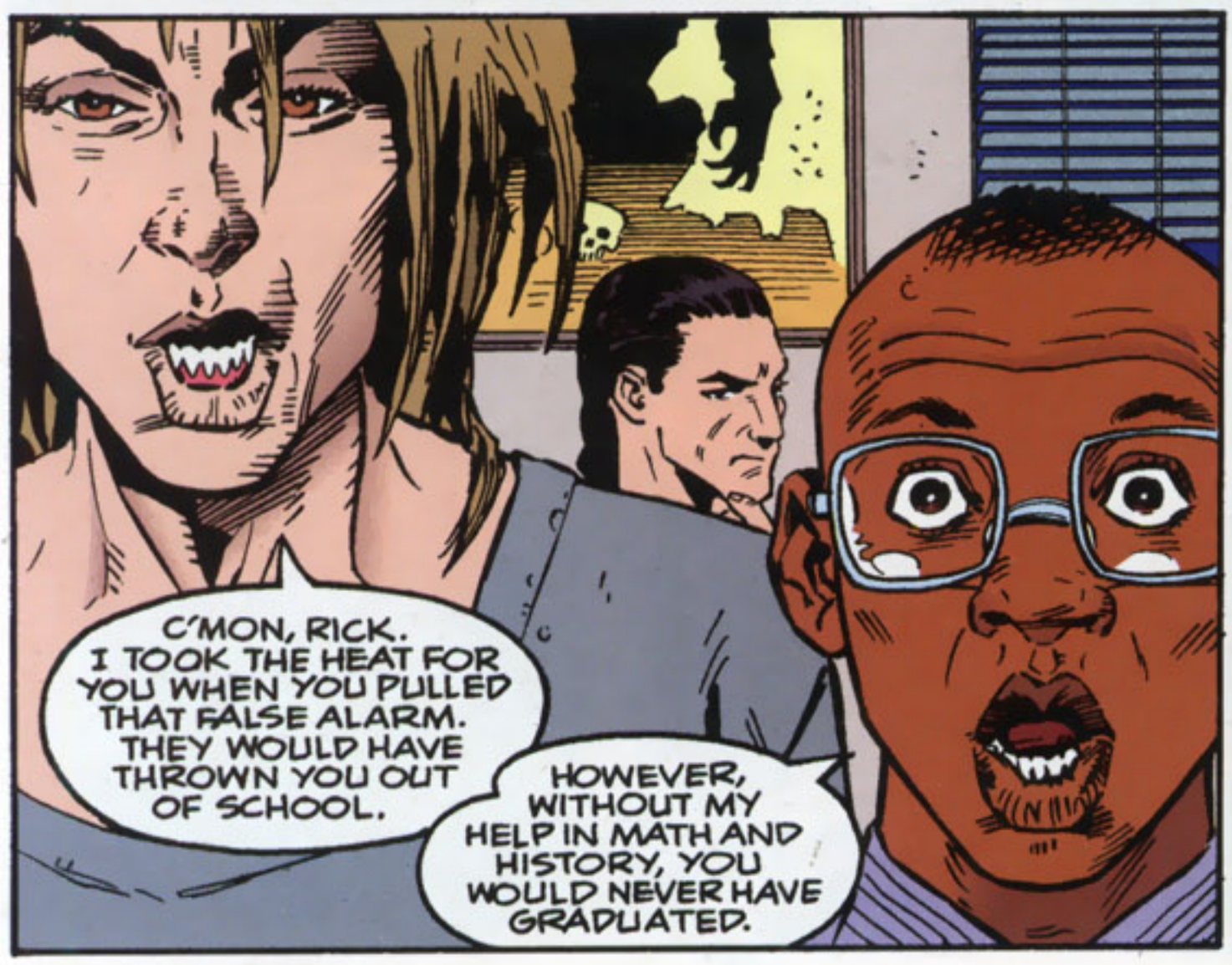
Gulp!

SOMETHING TERRIBLY ODD IS GOING ON HERE.
IT'S TRUE! GLASSES DO MAKE YOU SMART.


MAN, I THINK HE IS BIG-HEAD, FOR REAL.
HE'S SOMETHING, I KNOW THAT.
AND YOU SAY THE MASK ALONE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THIS?
YOWZAH.



GIMME!
HE'S MY FRIEND!
JUST LET ME SEE IT A SEC.
BACK!! BACK!!


C'MON, RICK. I TOOK THE HEAT FOR YOU WHEN YOU PULLED THAT FALSE ALARM. THEY WOULD HAVE THROWN YOU OUT OF SCHOOL.
HOWEVER, WITHOUT MY HELP IN MATH AND HISTORY, YOU WOULD NEVER HAVE GRADUATED.

Uhh, WELL, I MOWED THE LAWN FOR YOU ONCE, DIDN'T I?

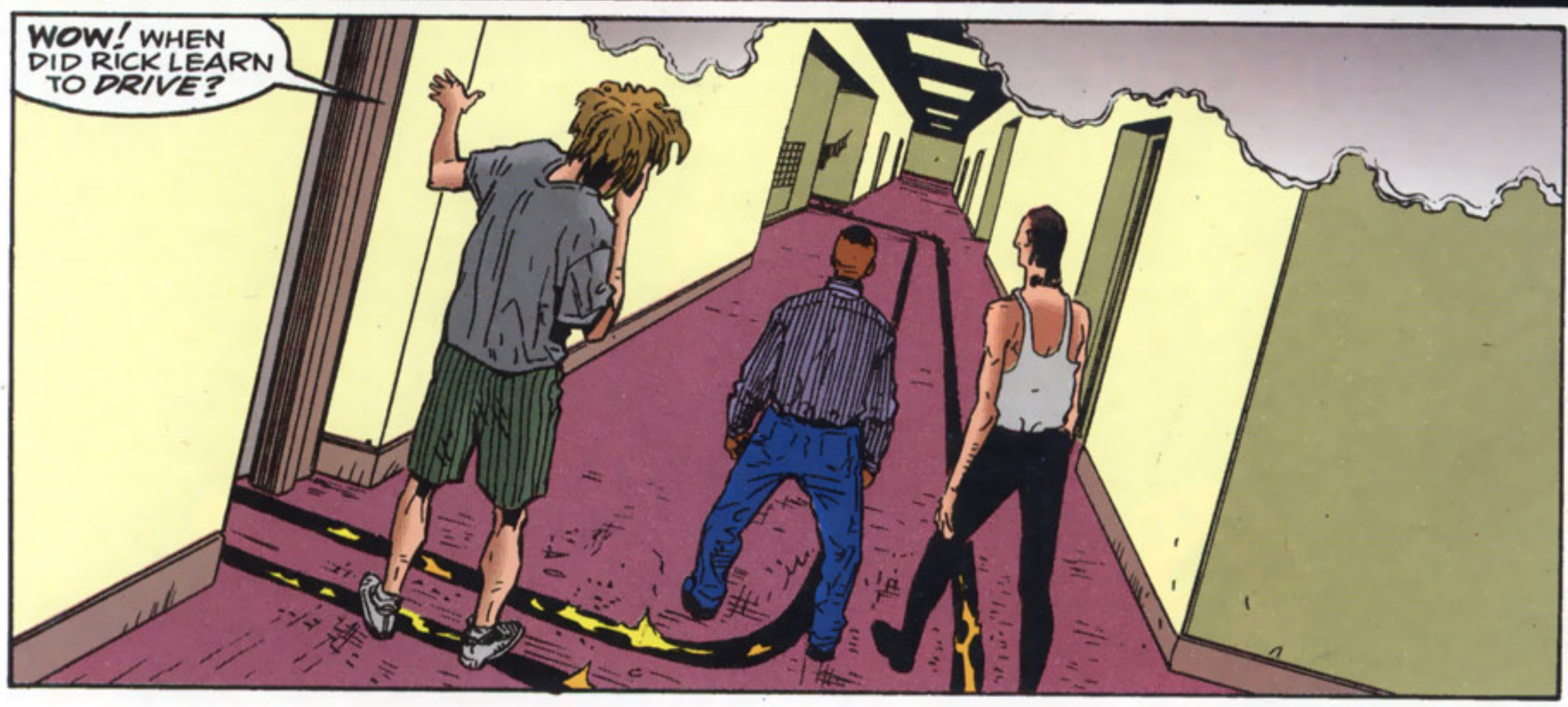
YOU EGG-SUCKERS KILL ME.
I DIDN'T COME OVER HERE TO PASS THE MASK AROUND LIKE A COPY OF PLAYBOY.
I CAME HERE TO TELL YOU KIDS THAT BIG-HEAD IS BACK!
AND HE'S GONNA STICK IT TO THE MAN!
"THE MAN"? RICK, WHAT ARE YOU BABBLING ABOUT?
LOVE TO EXPLAIN, ARCHIE, BUT--
(UH, COULD YOU STEP ASIDE?)
--BUT I GOT THINGS TO DO.
EXIT
VRRU

AUTHORITIES TO DEFY...

GOVERN-MENTS TO TOPPLE...

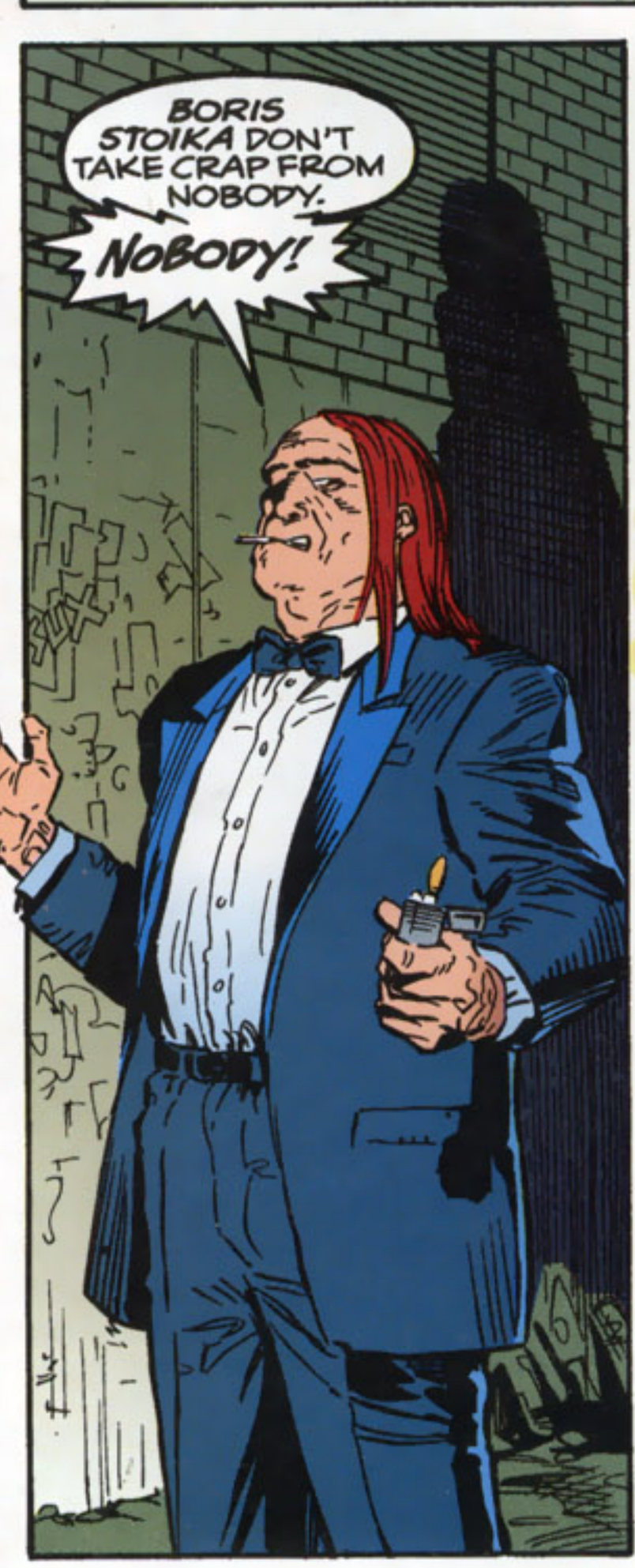
HOUSES TO EGG!

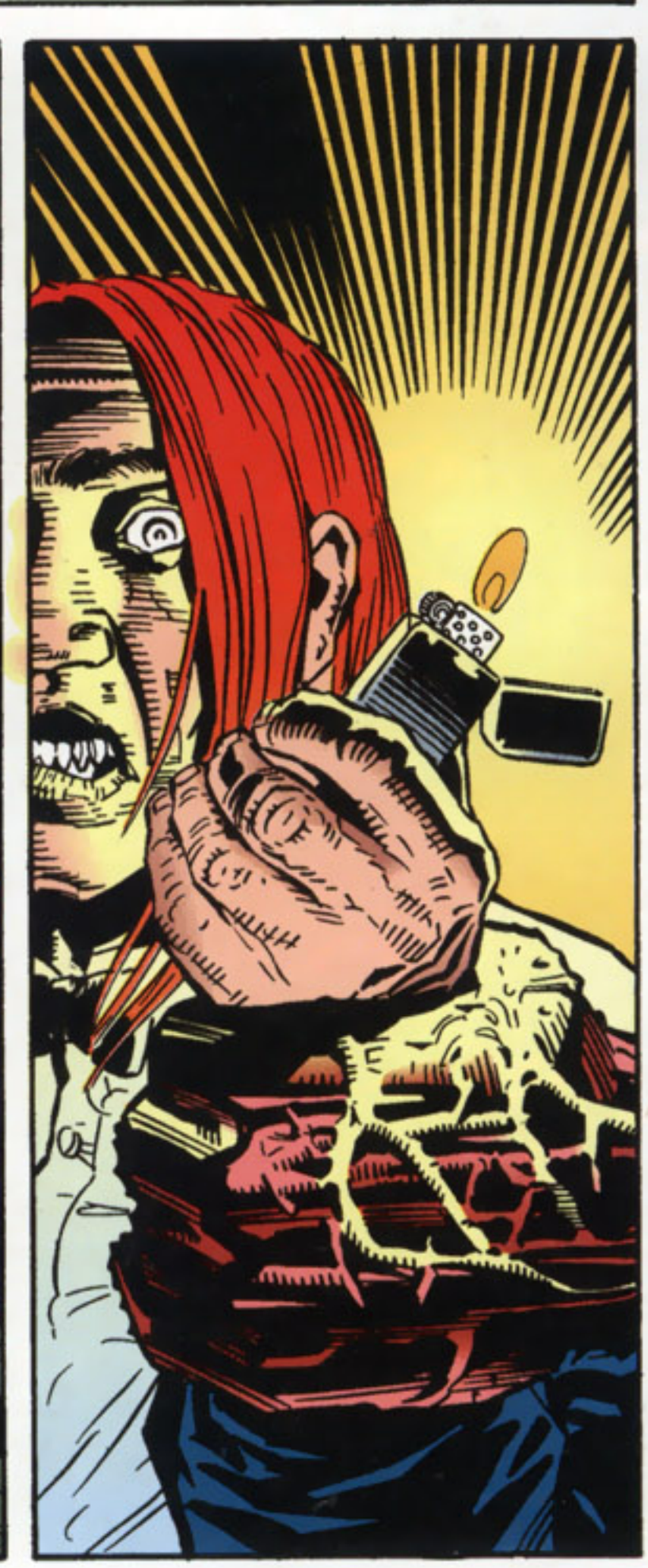
GIDDYAP!!



MEANWHILE, IN A REALLY BAD NEIGHBORHOOD...
THIS IS RIDICULOUS.
WAITING HERE FOR MY "RIDE" TO MOISHE VERTER'S PLACE LIKE SOME KINDA NOVICE.
I SWEAR, IF THEY BRING A BLINDFOLD, I'LL SHOOT 'EM ALL DEAD.
BIG HEAD RULES
No

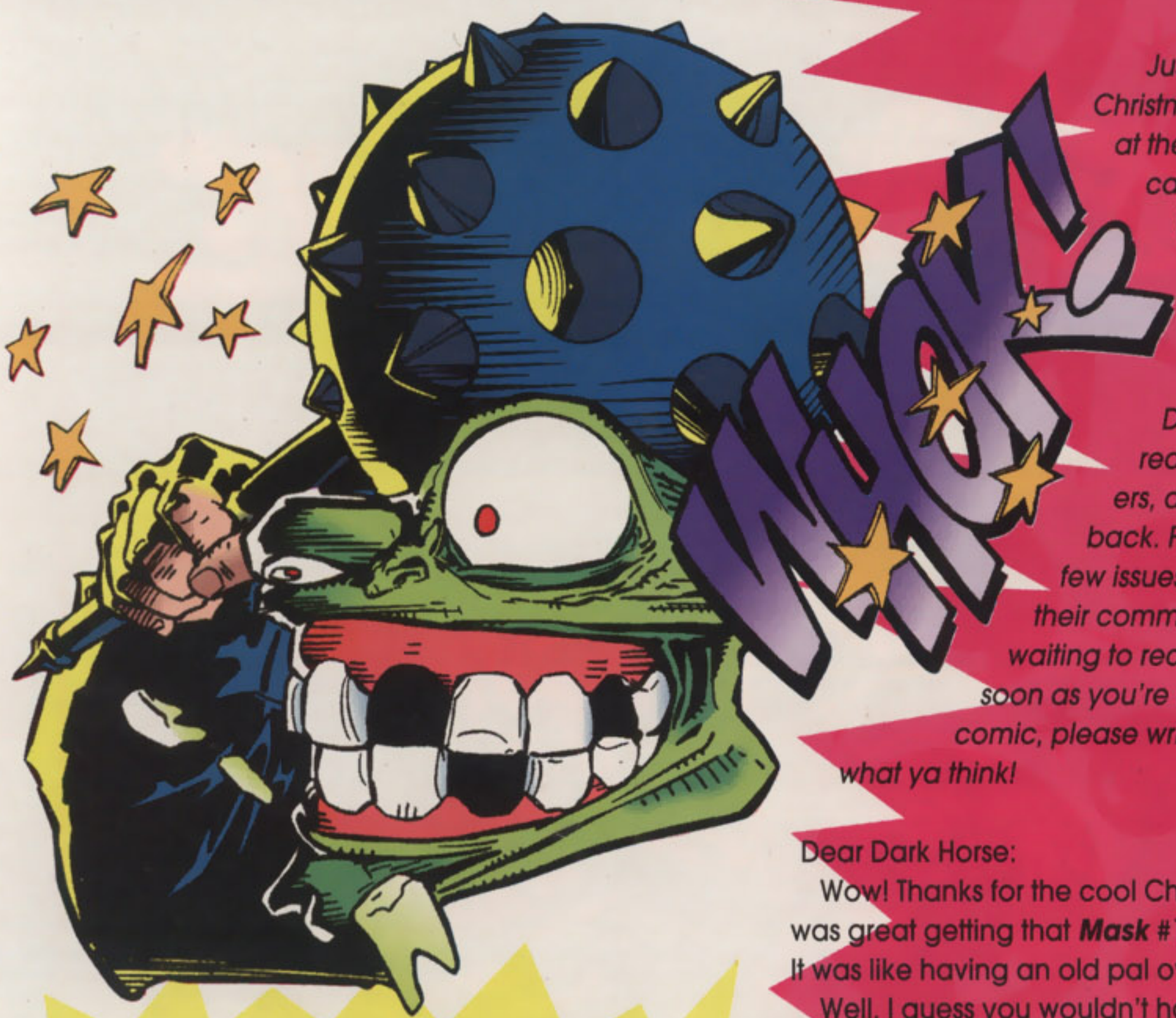
AND IF ANYBODY GIVES ME A HARD TIME ABOUT HOW I LOST MY LAST JOB WITH MOZZO, THEY'D BETTER WATCH OUT.


BORIS STOIKA DON'T TAKE CRAP FROM NOBODY.
NOBODY!



WOW!

HHHHHH...
HHHHHHH...
H-HEY, WALTER.
TO BE CONTINUED (OF COURSE)...



Just before the '94 Christmas holiday, we here at the Mask editorial camp mailed (we're too cheap to FedEx) out preview copies of **The Mask** *#1 to a handful of loyal Dark Horse Comics readers and letter writers, asking for their feedback. For the next few issues, we'll be running their comments while we're waiting to receive yours. So as soon as you're done reading this comic, please write and let us know what ya think!*

NOW THAT I'VE GOT YOUR ATTENTION...

Welcome to **The Mask** *#1.*

Some of you bought this comic because you read Dark Horse's earlier **Mask** *comic books (if you haven't read 'em already, then look for* **The Mask** *and* **The Mask Returns** *trade paperbacks, plug, plug), and/or because you're fans of John Arcudi and Doug Mahnke. Some of you are here because you saw and loved one of last summer's biggest movie blockbusters,* **The Mask**, *starring Jim Carrey (now available on videocassette...plug, plug, plug). Some of you are with us because you're colorblind and thought you were picking up the first issue of Marvel's new* Red Skull *series. Whatever your motivation, we're just glad you're here.*

This is the first issue (that's why we put that big 1 on the cover) of a new, ongoing monthly series starring comics' wackiest and most versatile hero. We've ~~ripped off~~ lovingly borrowed the formula of "miniseries within a series" from other comics, meaning "The Mask Strikes Back" by Arcudi, Mahnke, and Keith Williams is just the first of a long line of upcoming Mask epics (while we don't wanna distract you from this ish's tale, just to let you know we're working ahead of schedule and have some cool stuff in store, writer Evan Dorkin's "Hunt for Green October" is slated for issues #6-9).

Dear Dark Horse:

Wow! Thanks for the cool Christmas present. It was great getting that ***Mask*** #1 preview in the mail. It was like having an old pal over for the holidays.

Well, I guess you wouldn't have sent it to me if you weren't interested in my opinion—so I guess I'll have to give it to ya. Man, where do I start? I mean, really, what can I tell you guys about John Arcudi, Doug Mahnke, and ***The Mask*** comic books they make together that you guys don't already know for yourselves?

I suppose the first thing I noticed was that Doug wasn't the inker this time around. One of the Ten Commandments should have been "Thou shalt not ink the pencils of Doug Mahnke unless thou are Doug Mahnke"...or at least that's what I *used* to think until I saw this preview. Keith Williams did a good job, and while it's not my preference to have anyone else's inks on Doug's stuff, I found myself really liking what I saw. The ink work seems to have a genuine solidity to it, not unlike in appearance to the artwork of Chris Warner. (Come to think of it, I guess I'm even warming up to Jimmy Palmiotti's inks over Doug's pencils on ***X***.)

It will be interesting to see how Greg Wright handles the coloring job. Chris Chalenor did a great job last time with ***The Mask Returns***, but I don't think anyone will be able to top the watercoloring job Doug did for the first ***Mask*** series. Hell, just have Doug do all the pencils, inks, and colors for all the comics you guys put out. Is that so much to ask? Who else can draw like Moebius, Milo Manara, and John Bolton combined? No one, that's who! So chain the dude up and make him draw *all your* ***Mask*** *comics!*

O.K., I take that back. Now that I think of it, not only would that be impossible, not to mention

cruel, but I'm really interested to see how other artists and writers will handle The Mask and his world. Let me drop a hint: Pat Mills and Kevin O'Neill. I'm really glad that you've chosen to do a "miniseries" approach in ***The Mask***, like what Matt Wagner chose to do when he began ***Grendel***. This will definitely keep things fresh and interesting.

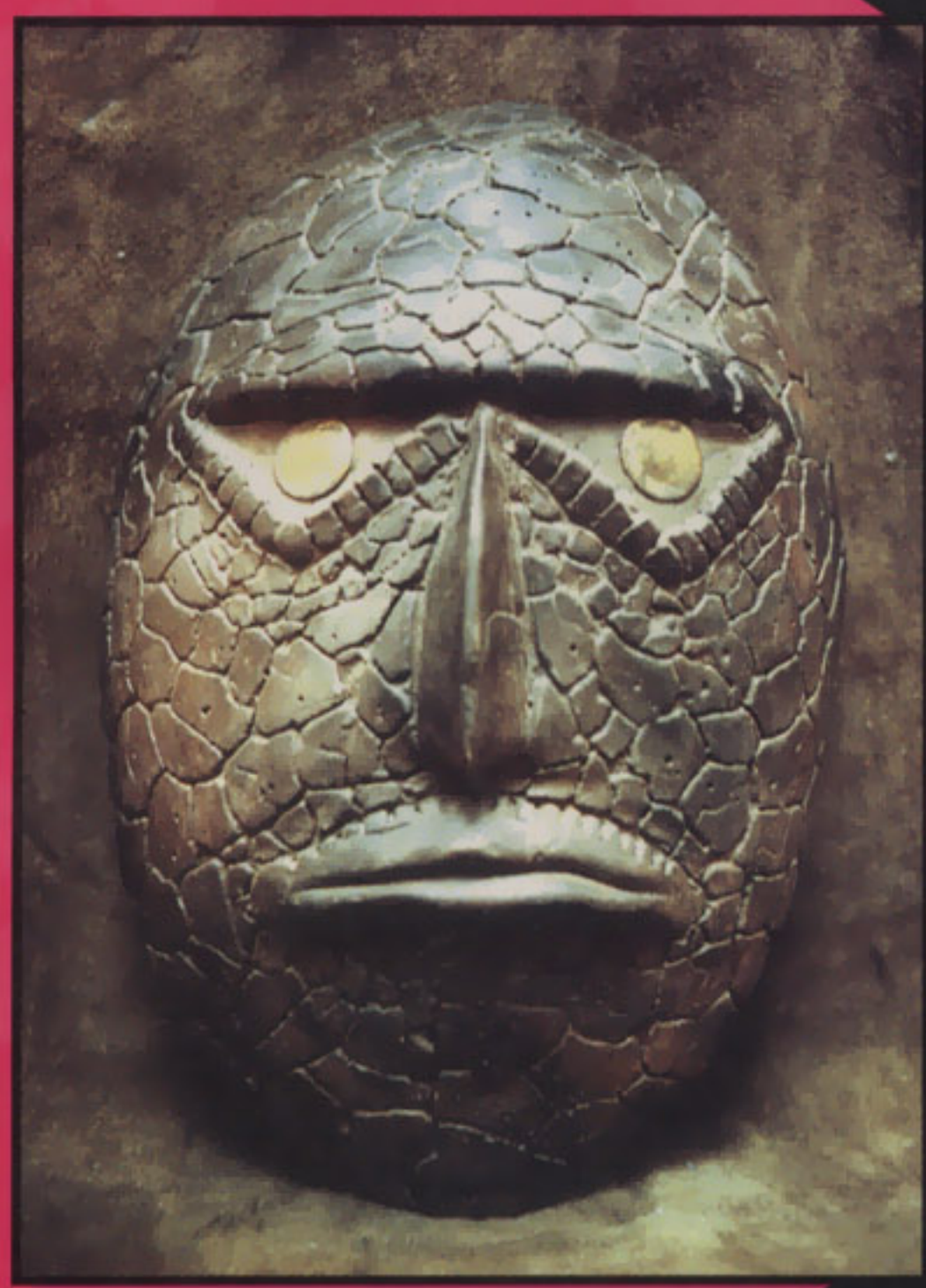
As for the story and script: Well, only having one issue (one fifth) of the story to go by, I can definitely say that John has things set to explode once more. The characters, plot, and dialogue all seem to make sense, and hey, Walter's back! Something's gonna happen, that's for sure! When The Mask and Walter start slappin' each other around again, I want to be there at ringside, rootin' 'em on.

Thanks for your time,
Rik Selby
1332 Hudson Rd.
Ferguson, MO 63135

All right, Mahnke, quit writin' these flattering letters about yourself and get back to your drawing board!

Seriously, Rik, thanks for your praise, and we're glad you like Keith Williams' inks over Doug's pencils. They're turning into a fine team, wouldn'tcha say? And by now, of course, you've seen the absolutely awesome Gregory Wright colors in print, too. (Hey, while we're handing out praise, let's not forget our letterer...letteress...Lois Buhalis, who's making our word balloons come to life. Great job, everyone!)

Rik Selby also sent a second letter with a photograph enclosed, which appears below:



Rik added, "It's a ceramic piece I made that is loosely based upon what the mask looks like in its inert state. I'll admit it doesn't look exactly like the one in your comics, but I was working strictly from memory when I made it. I used a pit-firing method similar to that of the native American method to achieve the right color."

Ye-OWza! Nice job, Rik!

Hey, we're outta space, but not outta letters, so that'll give us something to talk about next month. 'Til then, don't forget to write.

—Michael Eury
Car-free, not carefree

What's Wrong With This Letters Column???

I mean, *besides* the fact that it's written by a moron...it's missing a *title*, that's what! You know, some clever heading that differentiates this from other letters columns. If ***Barb Wire*** can have "Wires to Barb," and ***Grendel*** can have "Grendel's Lair," and *Superman's Girl Friend Lois Lane* can have "Letters to Lois and Lana," then the Constitution of the United States should certainly give *us* that right, too.

Problem is, we thought and thought about it, but drew a blank. So it's up to YOU.

PREEEEE-senting: a CONTEST! Name this letters column, and win groovy Mask prizes! Really. No lie. You'll help us out, get some cool stuff, and get your name in print. Now tell me that ain't sweet.

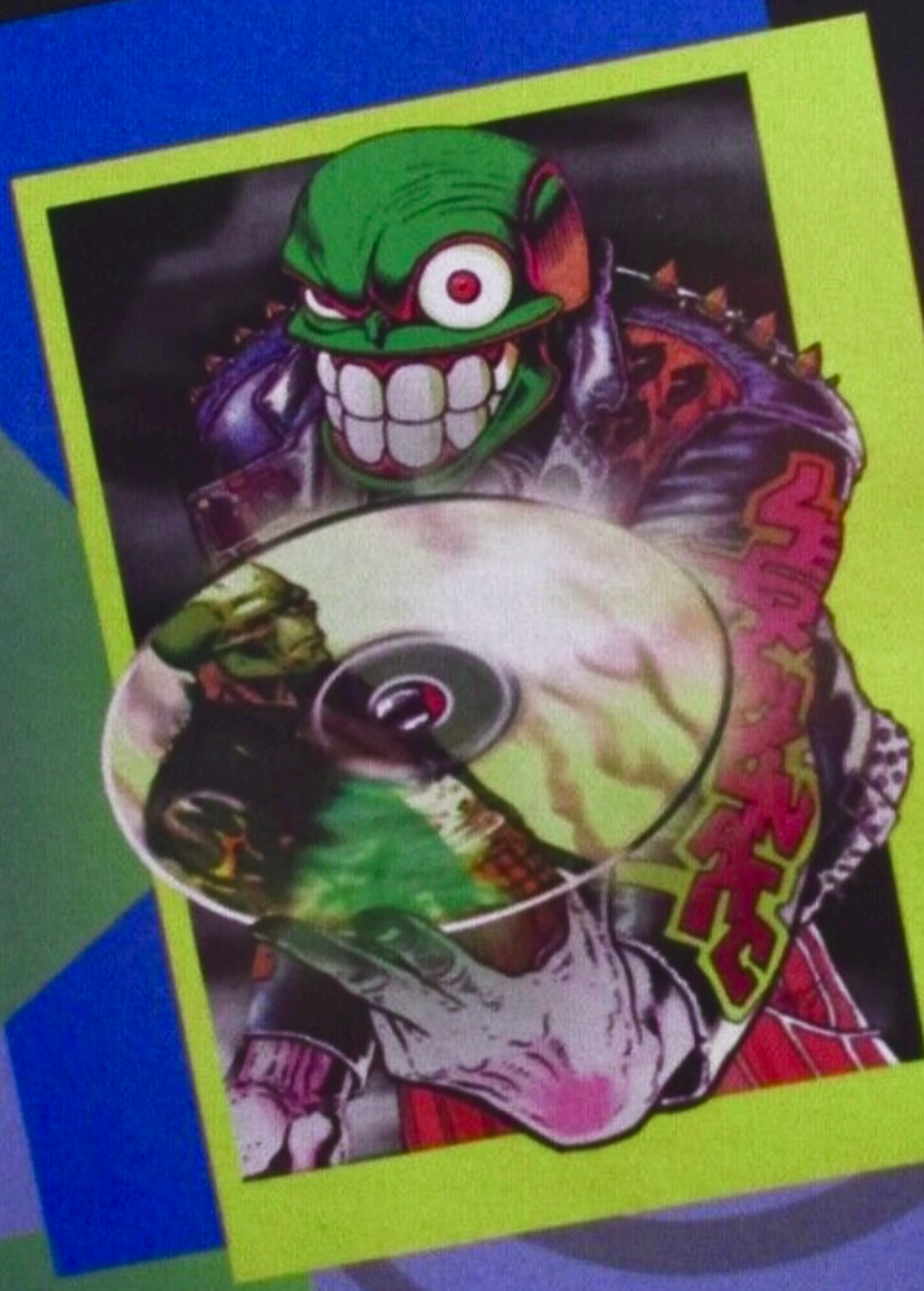
Send your suggested ***Mask*** letters page titles to:

THE MASK
Contest
Dark Horse Comics
10956 SE Main Street
Milwaukie, OR 97222
Deadline for entries is **April 15, 1995**—the same day the Tax Man gets ya!

And be forewarned: The title "Mask Mail" is too obvious and uninspired to use, so don't suggest it. Please. Thanks. See ya.

THE MASK™ THE ORIGIN

BEFORE THE MOVIE... THE DARK HORSE COMIC BOOK ON CD-ROM!



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